

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 233

By Jones

A RESOLUTION to recognize Serina Gilbert and Promise Land Heritage Association.

WHEREAS, it is the privilege of the members of this General Assembly to recognize those esteemed organizations whose members seek to preserve historical communities that contribute to the cultural enrichment of this State; and

WHEREAS, ably led by board chair Serina Gilbert, Promise Land Heritage Association is a nonprofit organization that preserves and interprets the history of Promise Land in Charlotte, which was established and settled by former enslaved persons from Cumberland Furnace during the Reconstruction Era of 1870-1875; and

WHEREAS, historic deed and census records reveal that the early settlers of Promise Land included Nathan Bowen, Joe Washington Vanleer, William Gilbert, John Grimes, Jeff Edmondson, Charles Redden, George Primm, and U.S. Colored Troop veterans Arch Nesbitt, John Nesbitt, Clark Garrett, Ed Vanleer, and Landin Williams; and

WHEREAS, these early settlers went on to become landowners, with their descendants continuing to own the land; and

WHEREAS, in time, the Promise Land community encompassed approximately 1,000 acres with more than fifty homes, several stores, three churches, and an elementary school; and

WHEREAS, by the mid-1950s, the once thriving community had diminished in number, with only a few remaining families; today, only St. John Promise Land Church and the old Promise Land School building remain; and

WHEREAS, in 2007, the Promise Land School building was placed on the National Register of Historic Places, and in 2010, a Civil War Trails Marker was placed at the site of the

historic school building in recognition of the Civil War records of brothers John and Arch Nesbitt;
and

WHEREAS, although many of the original families of Promise Land have moved away,
the community remains dear in the hearts of former residents and descendants who have
formed Promise Land Heritage Association, formerly known as Promise Land Community Club;
and

WHEREAS, established in 1988, Promise Land Heritage Association is a nonprofit
historic preservation and community service organization that works to preserve and interpret
the history of the Promise Land community; and

WHEREAS, Promise Land Heritage Association administers and oversees the operation
of the Promise Land Historic Site, which offers such activities and events as interpretive tours
and reenactments, educational and cultural enrichment programs, traveling exhibitions, and an
annual community festival; and

WHEREAS, current board chair and former executive director of Promise Land Heritage
Association Serina Gilbert, a descendant of Promise Land, has championed the community for
decades, touting the significance and relevance of the community locally and statewide; and

WHEREAS, a native of Charlotte, Ms. Gilbert received her Bachelor of Science degree
in Social Administration from Tennessee State University and a Master of Social Work degree
from Howard University in Washington, D.C.; she has worked in clinical social work,
administration, and community organization and taught throughout the United States for more
than forty years; and

WHEREAS, an active and important part of her community, she has participated in
numerous worthy organizations, including the Dickson County Leadership Council, Tourism
Council, and Tennessee Council on Developmental Disability, which she has served as vice
chair; she is a 2008 graduate of Dickson County Leadership and has served on the board of

directors of United Way of Dickson, the Dickson County Health Council, the Dickson County Community Arts Development, the Child Advocacy Center, and the Dickson County Heritage Book Committee; and

WHEREAS, no stranger to awards and accolades, Serina Gilbert is a 2008 recipient of the Governor's Volunteer Stars Award, and she was honored with the Helen Rial Leadership Award and the NAACP Bridge of Honor Award in 2017; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Gilbert exemplifies the spirit and allegiance to family and community that are characteristic of a true Tennessean; and

WHEREAS, Serina Gilbert and Promise Land Heritage Association are dedicated to preserving the legacy of the historically significant Tennessee community of Promise Land, and they should be specially recognized; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we commend Serina Gilbert and Promise Land Heritage Association on their continuing efforts to share and preserve the rich history of this true Tennessee treasure.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy and upon proper request made to the appropriate clerk, the language appearing immediately following the State seal appear without House or Senate designation.